difficult to implement to meausres necessary for turning around the financial and operational health of the power sector.

The forward looking reform oriented electricity Bill 2001 has been introduced in Parliament. The Bill, *inter-alia*, contains stringent provisions for penalty in case of power thefts. The Bill also includes provision for reduction of cross subsidies, and for payment of subsidies up front by the State Governments to the State Power Utilities where such subsidies are considered unavoidable.

Subsidised Power supply to agriculture

*356. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether subsidized power supply to agriculture is only benefiting the large and affluent farmers who own electric pumps;

(b) whether Government have made any survey or assessment in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether State Governments are being advised in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and steps proposed so that benefit reaches small and poor farmers equally?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) to (e) Electricity is a concurrent subject and distribution is the responsibility of the State Government. Retail tariff is determind by the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) or by the State Government/State Electricity Board where Regulatory Commissions have not been set up.

Supply to agriculture sector in the country is by and large subsidized. Even in States where SERCs determine tariff, the law empowers the State Government to give subsidies to a targeted group, if it so desires. The World Bank in its report on "Power supply to agriculture: case studies of Haryana and Andhra Pradesh" has observed that the electricity subsidy exclusively benefits electric pump owning farmer especially the medium to large farmers as they

predominantly own electic pumps and account for the larger share of the electricity consumption. A copy of the report has been circulated to all the States for taking appropriate action.

The resolution of the conference of Chief/Power Minister held on 3rd March, 2001 *inter alia* contained that the subsidies may be given only to the extent of State Governments capacity to pay the subsidies explicitly through budget provisions and the decisions of CMs of a minimum agricultural tariff of 50 paise may be implemented immediately. The ERC Act, 1998 mandates the Regulatory Commissions to decide the tariff so that it progressively reflect the cost of supply. The tariff orders passed by some SERCs reflect a trend in this direction.

In the new Electricity Bill, 2001 which has been introduced in the Lok Sabha, there is a specific provision that tariff should progressively reflect the cost of supply and cross subsidies be progressively reduced and eliminated.

Settlement of Displaced Hindus of Kashmir

†*357. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the places where the displaced Hindus of Kashmir have been settled alongwith the number of such persons;

(b) the details of the schemes for their rehabilitation;

(c) whether they can exercise their right to vote in the ensuing elections; and

(d) if not, what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) Majority of the Kashmiri migrants are living in Jammu region and Delhi. As per information provided by the State Governments/Union Territories concerned, these two places have registered 33618

† *Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.